

to add an expensive new drug benefit in Medicare.

Look, these are all things that people supported and opposed, but we committed to do them as a body. And you cannot make those decisions, you cannot vote to lower taxes or to increase spending and then turn around and say, I'm not going to pay for that. That is the worst sort of hypocrisy.

I'm glad that my friend from Louisiana (Mr. LANDRY) talked about credit cards, but he got it a little bit wrong. The debt ceiling is sort of like a credit card, but what we're talking about right now, because we are talking about paying for past decisions and commitments, would be as if I went to the electronics store and I bought myself a big screen TV, I bought myself a new microwave, and I bought myself a new home security system, and then I get home and a month later I get the credit card bill and I say, uh, I don't know if I'm going to pay this credit card bill. I took the decisions. I made the commitments. And now the time has come to honor those commitments.

Do we act as stewards of one of the best assets that this country has, our full faith and credit, the belief that the United States honors its commitments? This is a critical asset, particularly now at a time of great economic uncertainty. Do we act as stewards of that full faith and credit? Or do we use the debt ceiling as a gun to the head to say that unless you do X, Y and Z, unless you cut 2 trillion or 3 trillion, we won't raise the debt ceiling, which is what we are hearing from the Republican side today? Do you use it? Do you hold it hostage, the full faith and credit of the United States? That is what we are seeing today.

Look, there is no question we need to address the deficit. We need to address the long-term sustainability of Medicare and Social Security in an equitable way. We should do that. And this President has basically put everything on the table, including making some of my colleagues on the Democratic side very uncomfortable with Social Security and Medicare. But he has put them on the table because there can be no sacred cows, unless you're JOHN BOEHNER, or a Republican, and not everything is on the table because we won't put the immense amount of spending we do through the Tax Code for advantages for oil companies, for advantages for big agriculture and for all sorts of tax breaks for corporations and others. We won't even talk about that.

My friends, this comes down to the question of do we honor our commitments? The answer to that question must be yes.

CONGRESSIONAL PENSION PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBLE. This week, Madam Speaker, I will introduce a bill that

will amend the rules applicable to participation in the congressional pension plan. Under the present plan, upon completion of 5 years' service, a Member's pension vests. I believe a Member should make a more firm commitment than 5 years to become eligible to participate in the plan.

My bill, Madam Speaker, will increase the eligibility requirement from 5 years to 12 years. The bill, if enacted, will become effective at the convening of the 113th Congress. A Member could serve six 2-year House terms, two 6-year Senate terms or a combination thereof to become eligible to participate in the congressional pension plan.

If any colleagues are interested in my proposal, I will welcome cosponsors to the bill.

ENDING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I am here to join with my colleagues in thanking the gentlelady from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for all that she has done to provide leadership on an issue that has been critical to the American people on an issue that she could very justifiably say, "I told you so."

Since I've been in this House, it's been my distinct privilege to consider her a friend and to enjoy the leadership and the insight that she has provided to many of us. Her position on Afghanistan is correct and a necessary position as we see these times before us. Americans who feel the sting of doing more with less are connecting the dots between Federal spending priorities and the pain that they're feeling at home right now.

Americans struggling to put their kids through college without any Pell Grants or running out of unemployment benefits with no new job on the horizon cannot ignore the cost of this war. The war has cost taxpayers in my congressional district more than \$580 million so far. That's about 11,000 elementary school teachers that could be hired for a year or 84,000 students that could go to community college or a university or a trade school or a career school.

These are just some of the bad trade-offs we are making by spending our national resources on a war instead of fixing the problems that we have here at home. Ask yourself, which would you rather have, a war that is not making us safer and not worth the cost, or a more educated, prosperous America?

We cannot afford the nearly \$10 billion per month while families struggle to stay afloat and the slow recovery of our Nation continues. Keeping America safe does not require 100,000 troops in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda is no longer in Afghanistan but scattered across the world. It did not take 100,000 troops to find Osama bin Laden, and it does not

take a military occupation of Afghanistan to protect us from terrorist threats.

I am deeply proud of the hard work and incredible sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform. We know they are carrying out the mission in Afghanistan with dedication and extraordinary competence. Through this nearly 10-year military campaign, they have done all that we have asked of them and represented our Nation's very best values and ideals. Now it's time to bring our troops home, and bring them home to a new reality. Since the year 2000, we have lost 2 million jobs in this country while we have added 30 million people to our population. After 10 years of a failed fiscal policy that brags about job creators through tax cuts, incentives and subsidies to corporations, this failed policy continues to be promoted as a solution to our economy and to the recession that we find ourselves in.

We need to bring our troops home. We need to integrate them fully back into our society and into our country. One of the best ways to do that is to provide jobs and opportunity. And one way is for the government to create jobs in public service and public works. By putting America back to work, we are beginning to crawl out of the hole that we have been in for the last 10 years.

Afghanistan is a stark example of flawed priorities. As we go forward with the discussion of the debt ceiling, with how to balance this budget and how to articulate priorities that the American people want, let us not forget that one of the priorities the American people have insisted on time and time again is to end these two misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan, bring those troops home, redirect those resources to the needs that the American people face right now, and in this way, begin not only to make our economy better, but return some moral imperative to this Nation.

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JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. QUAYLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUAYLE. Madam Speaker, last Friday's jobs report was incredibly disappointing. We only added 18,000 jobs to the U.S. economy. Our unemployment rate went up to 9.2 percent. Not to mention the fact that we had a downgrade, a revision, of last month's, of May's job report to only 25,000 jobs. The deeper you go into that jobs report, the worse it gets, because for those who are underemployed, that's about 16 percent to 17 percent of the United States population, and that is not even including the 250,000 people who went off the rolls of the unemployed because they just stopped looking for work.

We've been talking about jobs for a long time. You hear it all the time in